

WORSBOROUGH
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1897.

BARNSELEY :

J. LODGE, PRINTER, STATIONER, &C., NEW STREET.

—
1898.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30294915>

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

Worsborough Urban District Council,

FOR THE YEAR 1897.

GENTLEMEN,—The year ending December 31st, 1897, was warmer than usual in the summer months, and exceptionally mild in the last quarter.

The rainfall for the year was two inches below the average of the preceeding 25 years, the deficiency being most marked in the months of October and July.

The warm weather of July and August raised the temperature of the subsoil at a depth of 4-ft. to 56° Fahr on July 18th, and to 59° on August 8th to 10th, and kept it above 56° until September 5th.

In 1896 the temperature at the same depth never rose above 57°.

As a high subsoil temperature is favourable to Diarrhœa epidemics, it is not surprising that whilst in 1896 there were only 7 deaths from Diarrhœa, in 1897, 14 deaths from that disease were recorded.

This prevalence of Diarrhœa was followed, as is often the case, by an outbreak of Typhoid Fever, fortunately not so fatal as in previous years there having been only one death from it in the latter half of the year.

Death from acute Lung Diseases, such as Bronchitis and Pneumonia, were frequent during the year, the majority occurring in the first four months of the year when Influenza was more or less prevalent, and also in December.

Scarlet Fever and Measles were both less fatal than in former years, but Whooping Cough was prevalent in the latter half of the year, especially in September and October.

There were 219 deaths in the district during the year, to which have to be added 7 deaths occurring outside the district, in Public Institutions, Hospitals, Asylums, &c., amongst persons belonging to Worsborough, giving a total of 226.

It is estimated that there were about 10 more houses occupied in the middle of 1897, than at the corresponding period of 1896. We may therefore calculate that there was an increase of about 50 in the population, which added to the estimate for 1896, brings it up to 11,380.

Assuming this figure to be approximately correct the death rate for the year was 19·85 per thousand, which is below the average (21·99) for the preceeding ten years, but above that for England and Wales for the same year (17·4).

There were 424 births registered during the year, giving a birth rate of 37·26 per thousand on the estimated population, below the average for this district, which for the preceeding ten years was 41·14, but much above that for England and Wales during the year (29·7).

Of the deaths 84, or 37·16 per cent. were amongst infants, being at the rate of 198·11 per thousand, births, or considerably above that for England and Wales, which for the year was 156.

Amongst children under 5 there were 124 deaths, or 54·42 per cent. of the whole number of deaths. This large proportion is due to the fact that all the deaths from Diarrhœa and 32 or nearly three-quarters of the deaths from acute chest affections were amongst children under 5.

The seven principal zymotic diseases, including Membranous Croup, with Diptheria, caused 27 deaths, or at the rate of 2·37 per thousand persons living, which is not much above that for England and Wales, is a slight improvement on the rate for 1896 in Worsborough (which was 2·55), and would have been still more favourable but for the deaths from Diarrhœa, which were 13 in number, or more than half of the whole. Of the remaining 13 deaths from zymotic diseases, 6 were from Whooping Cough, 2 each from Scarlet Fever, Measles, and Typhoid Fever, and 1 was from Membranous Croup.

There were, I am glad to say, far fewer cases of Infectious Diseases notified under the Act than in 1896, the total number having been 45, as compared with 198 in the year before.

Of these, 22 were cases of Typhoid Fever, 10 of Scarlet Fever, 9 Erysipelas, 2 Puerperal Fever, 1 Diphtheria, and 1 Membranous Croup.

Every case was visited as soon as possible to ascertain the sanitary conditions under which it was placed. Steps were taken for the removal of any defects in the case of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria, the schools attended by children living in the houses were warned against admitting them so long as the risk of infection lasted, and isolation in the Kendray Hospital was offered to those suffering from Typhoid or Scarlet Fever.

In only 10 cases out of 32, or 31·21 per cent. was this offer accepted. This is an improvement on 1896, when only 12·5 per cent. were removed, but compares unfavourably with Barnsley, where over 50 per cent. were removed last year, whilst other authorities have, I believe, exceeded this proportion.

Of the Scarlet Fever cases 4 were on Worsborough Common, 3 of them in one house; 3 were in Worsborough Dale; 2 at Birdwell; and 1 at Worsborough Bridge.

Three were in January, and three in February, leaving only four for the rest of the year, and of these, one did not originate in the district, and ought not to have come into it until he had ceased to be in a condition to convey infection.

When his illness began he was in lodgings in Chesterfield, and on being informed that he had Scarlet Fever, at once took the train to Barnsley, and thence came on to Worsborough Dale. The Chesterfield Sanitary Authorities wrote immediately to tell us what had happened, but could not give his address; we were, however, able to trace him, and within two days of our receiving the letter we had him removed to the Kendray Hospital, his being the only case of Scarlet Fever so removed.

On the same day the facts were reported to your Council, and a resolution passed that legal proceedings should be taken as soon as the patient was fit to appear in court.

This resolution was, however, rescinded at a subsequent meeting, and consequently no proceedings were taken. Fortunately there was no spread of the disease in Worsborough Dale from this case, but I am unable to say what happened to his fellow passengers in the two or three railway carriages he must have travelled in during his journey from Chesterfield to Barnsley.

Of the 22 cases of Enteric or Typhoid Fever, 1 was at Birdwell, 1 at Worsborough Common, 3 in Worsborough Dale, and 16 at Worsborough Bridge,

and of these last 7 were in one house in Blackburn Row, which furnishes a good illustration of one of the dangers proceeding from the wet ashpits which are only too common in some parts of your district.

Early in September a case of Enteric Fever was notified in this house, and removal to the Kendray Hospital declined, the patient being nursed at home.

The house itself was in fair sanitary condition, but the ashpit connected with the privy was wet, and the soil in front of the ashpit saturated with moisture, often with pools lying on the surface.

Now recent experiments have shown that the Typhoid bacillus can grow with great rapidity in soil if it is kept moist with organically polluted water.

The organic pollution was here supplied by the wet ashpit into which the excreta from the patient nursed at home were doubtless thrown, and the necessary warmth by the warm weather of September. The result must have been a luxuriant growth of the Typhoid bacillus, for in October and November 6 other persons in the house fell ill with Typhoid Fever, and 5 of them were removed to the Hospital.

Four of the other cases were also removed to the Kendray Hospital, and though many were very severe all eventually recovered, the only deaths being amongst those who remained at home.

Only one case of Diptheria was reported, and that not a fatal one, but there was one fatal case of Membranous Croup, a disease closely allied to, if not identical, with Diptheria.

There were two notifications of Puerperal Fever, one of which recovered, and the other died a month later from Kidney Disease.

Erysipelas was notified in 9 cases. The only fatal one was after an injury to the head. Sanitary defects were found in two cases.

Of diseases not coming under the Notification Act, Whooping Cough was somewhat prevalent in the latter half of the year, causing 6 deaths, of which 3 were in the Barrow houses, and there were two deaths from Measles in September and November in the Birdwell part of the district.

There were two deaths attributed to Influenza, in May, but the disease was not unknown in a milder form at other parts of the year.

The deaths from Diarrhœa, 14 in number, were all between July 18th, when the temperature of the subsoil 4 feet below the surface, rose to 56° Fahr, and September 28th, when it fell below 54°.

Four of these were at Birdwell, and five in Worsborough Dale, whilst Worsborough Common and Worsborough Bridge below the railway furnished two each.

There were no deaths from this disease in the New England Barrow houses, though other zymotic diseases are apt to find there only too many victims. Probably their separate and better paved back yards, and their drier ashpits may account for their comparative exemption.

Besides the work done in connection with cases of infectious diseases coming to our knowledge, the usual systematic inspections have been made with a view to the prevention of disease by the removal of causes likely to lead to it.

In many cases verbal warning has been sufficient to secure the removal of nuisances injurious to health; where it was not formal notices were served, which was done in 65 cases, but no legal proceedings were required, and your Inspector reports that all the notices served were complied with before the end of the year. In August, on account of certain complaints as to the quantity and quality of the Water Supply in the Haverlands Lane and Kendal Green district, which is one of the few parts of the township not provided with water mains from the reservoir of the Barnsley Corporation—I made a special inspection of that part of the district. Five samples of water were taken from various wells, tanks, and ponds furnishing the supply for the eleven houses with their 57 inhabitants. These were chemically examined and none of those used for drinking purposes were found to be of a quality likely to be dangerous to health.

There were, however, three or four houses in which decided inconvenience was felt, especially in dry weather, from a deficiency, in the quantity available within easy reach.

Some of the owners of property refusing to bear their share of the cost of a main from the Old Tollbar house, nothing has yet been done.

In the rest of the district the water supply is satisfactory in quality, and in most parts sufficient in quantity. A new reservoir is in course of construction at Midhope, from which it is hoped that a more constant supply to the higher parts of the district will be obtained.

The Scavenging has been done with regularity and thoroughness by men under your direct control, though in the summer occasionally, a more free use of disinfectant powder was desirable.

No extension of the system of sewers has been made during the year, but 9 new waste water closets have been provided, and the drainage of Excelsior Terrace, Birdwell, has been much improved.

There have been some complaints of smell from the sewer ventilation in various parts of the district, and several of them have from time to time been closed or narrowed into pipes, probably with the result of increasing the smell somewhere else. It is rather difficult to satisfy everybody in this matter, but probably more frequent thorough flushing of the sewers would be the most sanitary way of dealing with the matter.

The sanitary condition of the district at the end of the year so far as the prevalence of infectious disease was concerned, was satisfactory, no notification of any such disease having been received for the last half of the month.

In other respects also, your district compares favourably with your neighbours; your water supply, sewers, and sewage disposal systems being all satisfactory and a beginning having been made towards getting rid of the privy system, which you, like the rest of Yorkshire have inherited from your predecessors, nor are there many districts where so large a number of cottage houses are provided with paved and separate yards as is the case at New England. It is, however, desirable that you should have a bye-law requiring the paving of backyards, at any rate, in all new houses, to prevent the soil from becoming sodden with fermenting filth, as in unpaved yards exposed to contamination of all kinds, it must necessarily become, unless from time to time the surface can be washed and scrubbed, a process obviously impossible in the majority of our cottage backyards.

As I said when speaking of Typhoid Fever, it has been proved that its bacillus can live and multiply in soil polluted, as that of many backyards, from its porous nature, must be, and no doubt when we are able to separate and study the bacilli which cause other diseases such as Diarrhœa, we shall find that they are also able to flourish under some similar, but probably slightly varying conditions.

Every advance in our knowledge of the causes of disease strengthens our conviction of the importance of cleanliness. The antiseptic methods which have revolutionized Surgery are but scientific cleanliness.

Pasteur taught us the power of micro-organisms, Lister showed us how to keep our wounds clean from them, and the mortality of certain operations has been diminished to the hundredth part of what it used to be.

When we learn to apply the same principles in our houses, backyards, and streets, we shall see a similar change in our Sanitary Statistics.

I am, gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, M.D., Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

February 14th, 1898.

[A.]

Table of Deaths.

MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.

At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.
219	84	40	9	14	43	29

Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto—

7	—	—	—	—	5	2
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF
CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

	Scarlatina	Membranous Croup	Enteric or Typhoid Fever	Measles	Whooping Cough	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy	Heart Disease	Injuries.	All other Diseases	TOTAL.
Under ... 5	1	1	...	1	6	14	11	32	1	2	55	124
5 upwards ...	1	...	2	1	...	...	16	11	16	5	43	95

Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto.
5 years and upwards—Injuries 1, all other Diseases 6—TOTAL, 7.

Table of **Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness**, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1897, in the Worsborough Urban Sanitary District, classified according to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.

POPULATION AT ALL AGES.

	Census, 1891.	Estimated to middle of 1897	Registered Births
Worsborough...	... 9905	... 11380	... 424

[B.]	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS							REMOVAL TO ISO- LATION HOSPITAL. (Kendray Hospital, Ardsley.)	
	Small Pox	Scarlatina	Diphtheria	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Ty- phoid Fever	Puerperal	Erysipelas	Scarlatina	Enteric or Typhoid.
WORSBOROUGH. (Area 3,778 Acres.)									
Under 5 Years	7	1	1	3	...	...	...	1
5 Years and upwards	3	...	...	19	2	9	1	8

Notification Compulsary in District since Nov. 1, 1890.
Area in Acres, 3778. Isolation Hospital in Ardsley Urban District.



